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International Penal and Prison Congress

Brief report of the proceedings of the Ninth...

[New York?]

[1925]

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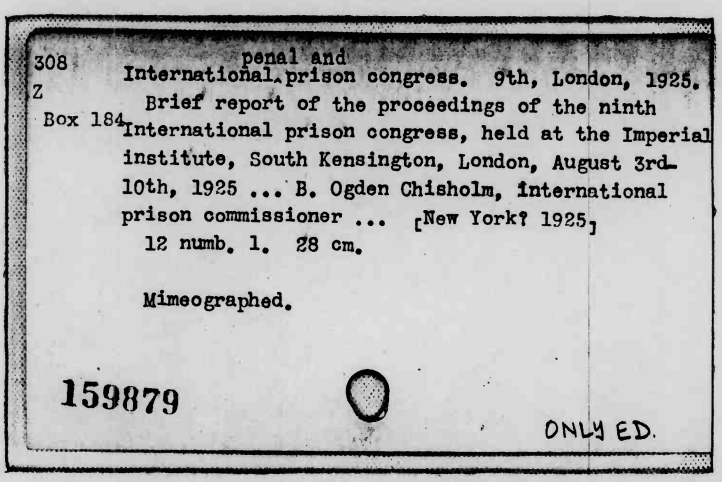

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International prison congress. 9th, London, 1925.
Brief report of the proceedings of the ninth International prison congress, held at the Imperial institute, South Kensington, London, August 3rd-10th, 1925 ... B. Ogden Chisholm, international prison commissioner ... [New York? 1925,]
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BRIEF REPORT

OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

NINTH INTERNATIONAL PRISON CONGRESS

HELD IN THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE

SOUTH KENSINGTON, LONDON

AUGUST 3rd-10th, 1925

* * * * * * *

(Note)

A subsequent official report
of considerable length, will
be available at a later date.

* * * * * * *

B. Ogden Chisolm,
International Prison Commissioner
66 Beaver Street,
New York City.

Nov. 17, 1925 AM

The Ninth International Prison Congress was held in London, August 3rd to 10th, 1925, but because the typed translation from the French, covering the full proceedings of the week there, has not, as yet, reached me, the task of transcribing all the material of the proceedings in the General Assembly and Section Meetings has not been completed. In any case I feel certain you would not wish to be burdened with all of it. I was only able to bring with me on my return a part of it and the balance will follow on the next westward trip of the Homeric, arriving here November 4th. This, therefore, is a summary.

It was the first International Congress that I had attended since my appointment as United States Commissioner, but with the cooperation of the Official Delegates, who appeared and took an active part, together with over twenty-five State Delegates and other Americans who appeared. I can feel that our country contributed her full share to the success of the Congress.

I was accompanied by Mr. E. R. Cass, Secretary of the New York Prison Association, and Hon. W. F. Penn, Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Industrial School at Morganza, on our eastward journey. They went over with me on the Homeric, leaving New York July 18th. We made a short detour to Madrid and visited some of the Spanish prisons, returning in good time for the opening of the Congress in London. Both Mr. Cass and Mr. Penn rendered valuable service to the cause,

and their efforts were greatly appreciated by me, for without their helpful cooperation, I shoul have been sadly handicapped.

I was agreeably surprised at the conditions found in Spain. Thru centuries there the prisons have had a bad name, but due to the efforts of Fernando Cadalso, Prison Commissioner from Spain, they have been thoroughly reorganized. Cass, Penn and I went to the great Central Prison in Madrid and found it quite up-to-date, with hopes on the part of Cadalso of having it yet better. The Reformatory at Ocana is a model institution and there are many places in America that could take a lesson from this modern school, where Spanish adults get a better glimpse of life.

It might be interesting to observe the wide spread manner in which this 9th Congress drew representatives from fifty-four Nations. There were delegates from: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Bolivia, British Guiana, Bulgaria, Canda, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Egypt, Esthonia, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Gold Coast, Greece, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Italy, India, Irish Free State, Japan, Latvia, Luxemburg, Lithuania, New South Wales, New Zealand, Norway, Palestine, Persia, Philippines, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Queensland, Roumania, Serbia, Siam, Sierre-Loeme, South Africa, South Rhodesia, Spain, Straits Settlements, Sweden,

Switzerland, Trinidad, Turkey, United States of America, and Uruguay.

Over six hundred and fifty persons paid one Pound each for membership to participate in the proceedings.

HOW AMERICA PARTICIPATED:

Of the Official Delegates, appointed by President Coolidge, who attended the Congress, besides Mr. Wm.F. Penn, I was honored by the cooperation of the following:

Dr. Herman M. Adler	State Criminologist, Illinois
Hon. Sanford Bates	Commissioner of Corrections, Mass.
Dr. Amos W. Butler	Former Secretary, Board of State Charities, Indiana.
Dr. Hastings H. Hart	Penologist and Consultant, New York.
Mrs. Jessie D. Hodder	Supt. Women's Reformatory, Mass.
Hon. Charles H.Johnson	Sec'y.State Board of Charities, N.Y.
Dr. R. F. C. Kieb	Supt. Matteawan State Hospital, N.Y.
Dr. Frank Moore	Pres. American Prison Association, Rahway, New Jersey.

The three official delegates who were appointed, and who were unable to attend were: Hon. John J. Sillivan, Minnesota - Major Lewis E. Lawes, New York - and Professor R.B. Van Klein Smid of California. Of the State Delegates who appeared and gave generously of their time, I may mention:-

Hon. Wm. G. Baxter	Conn.
Mrs. Mary C.C. Bradford	Colorado
Dr. S.P. Breckinridge	Kentucky
Miss Emma K. Davis	W. Virginia

Hon. Calvin Derrick	New Jersey
Col. Leon C. Faulkner	New York
Dr. Bernard Glueck	New York
Rev. William F. Hopp	Michigan
Professor P.L. Harned	Tennessee
Judge J.J. Mayfield	Alabama
Mrs. J.J. Mayfield	Alabama
Mr. Wm. M. Marks	Alabama
Mrs. Wm. M. Marks	Alabama
Robert C.N. Monahan	Rhode Island
T. Marcellus Marshall	W. Virginia
Mr. James P. Ramsay	Mass.
Mrs. Charles H. Remington-	Rhode Island
Mrs. Norman Sharp	Georgia
Decatur M. Sawyer	New Jersey
Elmer E. Scott	Texas
Henry W. Tomlinson	Illinois
Dr. James Talmage	Utah
William van der Wall	Penn
Edward M. Wistar	Penn

Besides these about 20 other Americans took part in the discussions.

LANCASTER HOUSE RECEPTION:

As an evidence of British hospitality, the delegates and members of the Prison Congress, upon their arrival in London, found invitations awaiting them to attend a Reception at Lancaster House on the evening of August 3rd, tendered by His Brittanic Majesty's Government, to meet their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess Arthur of Connaught. The Home Secretary, Sir William and Lady Joynson Hicks acted as hostesses. It was specified, in the invitation sent out, that full evening dress should be worn with medals and decorations. It would be difficult to describe the grandeur of this affair with the foreign Delegates emblazoned by the various honors and ribbons bestowed upon them, especially when contrasted with the Americans

who were conspicuous by the lack of them. The great benefit to be derived from a gathering of this kind was the fact that it brought people together at the beginning of the week, and enabled others, interested in the same cause, to become acquainted. This magnificent Palace in St. James, was purchased from its former owner, by the late Lord Leverhulme, known as the Soap King, and it was presented by him to the British Government. In its spacious halls there is a valuable collection of antiques and ancient dresses worn by the Kings and Queens of old.

EIGHTH CONGRESS:

The last Congress, which was the Eighth, was held in 1910 at Washington, D. C., when 45 different nations were represented, and over a hundred foreign Delegates, as guests of the United States, made a special tour of two thousand miles to visit the American prisons. It is interesting to note that the first Congress was held in London in 1872, and we found people gathering fifty-three years later, in behalf of the same cause, in the same city.

NINTH CONGRESS OPENS:

The Congress itself opened on the morning of Tuesday, August 4th, at the Imperial Institute at South Kensington. This building has the official title of the "Imperial Institute of the United Kingdom, the Colonies and India". It was erected as a National Memorial of the jubilee of Queen Vic-

toria, by whom it was opened in May 1893. It is spacious and imposing and was placed at the disposal of the Congress by the British Government. The present object of the Institute is to promote the resources of the Empire by arranging expositions of natural products, especially of the "Colonies and India", and to provide for their investigation, collection and dissemination, along scientific, technical and commercial lines.

At the Institute, the Government had placed, for the use of the Congress, the Great Hall, and East and West Galleries, the Senate Room, several Conference Rooms, and the Cowasjee Jehanghier Hall.

Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise presided. Sir Evelyn has served as President of the International Prison Commission for over a quarter of a century, and is loved and respected by all. He is a central figure in Prison work the world over. A most interesting address was made by Sir William Joynson Hicks. This, as well as others delivered during the Congress, I have in full, and they will appear in my official report. A few words of appreciation were spoken by Mr. Victor Almquist of Sweden, the oldest member of the International Commission, who, in thanking Sir Joynson Hicks, proposed him as Honorary President of the Congress. Dr. Hastings H. Hart was unanimously elected Vice President of the Congress. At this General Assembly, Presidents of the different sections were elected.

SECTION MEETINGS:

It would be both impossible and impractical for me to report in detail what transpired at the different section meetings held each afternoon. It will appear in my official report to be submitted to the State Department at a subsequent date, but I might say that the different sections handled the problems under three headings, namely, ADMINISTRATION, LEGISLATION, PREVENTION, with amazing skill. The real vital work was done at these meetings, and the President of each Section had a heavy burden to carry and a deal of patience to direct the discussions both with a view of getting results and economizing on time. The full details of these meetings, with the expressions from the different speakers would in itself fill a small volume.

These discussions continued each afternoon of the first, second, fourth, and fifth days, the third day in the afternoon, being set aside for a visit by the Delegates who went in specially provided conveyances to Windsor Castle, where a group photograph was taken, and every possible courtesy was extended to them by the British Government.

SECOND DAY:

The morning of Wednesday, August 5th, the General Assembly listened to a brilliant address, delivered by the Right Honorable the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, K. G., on the "Principles of Punishment". Lord Oxford and Asquith explained how in England, the Penitentiary System had developed, and how

the primary idea of punishment had evolved, and how little by little, it had become modified to a desire to reform the criminal, rather than punish him. His address was received with great enthusiasm.

Only one event marred the tranquility of the Congress - and that was when a telegram announced the death of F. Woxen, Treasurer of the International Prison Commission, who died, after a long illness, in Oslo, Norway - two days after the Congress opened.

THIRD DAY:

The morning of Thursday, August 6th, the Right Honorable Lord Hewart, the Lord Chief Justice of England, honored us with an address under the title of: "Alternatives to Imprisonment". Lord Hewart expressed the thought that all prisons had certain defects which made it desirable to use other means of correctives. He did not wish to criticise unfavorably the punishment by imprisonment of offenders, but he thought it quite possible that there were other measures which might be infinitely superior to it, and should therefore be preferred. For the expression of his views he received great applause.

HYDE PARK HOTEL DINNER:

On Thursday evening, a dinner was tendered to the Delegates of the International Prison Congress by the British Government, at the Hyde Park Hotel, where the Right Honorable Sir William Joynson Hicks, Bt. M.P., Secretary of State for Home Affairs presided. Over 350 guests were present, and it

was a notable and joyous event. I took occasion to compliment Sir Joynson Hicks on his knowledge of this deep problem, and asked him how he acquired his information. He replied:"I have made it my business to go to the prisons and find out the exact situation."

FOURTH DAY:

The Congress met again Friday, August 7th, and those who attended the General Assembly, which opened at ten o'clock in the morning, listened to a remarkable address by Lord Cave, the Right Honorable, the Lord Chancellor, on "The Indeterminate Sentence". Several members of the International Commission were privileged to meet Lord Cave before he entered the Assembly Room to deliver his address, and I happened to be one so favored, and he, knowing that America was committed to the indeterminate sentence, expressed his great admiration for our country in taking such a stand. "England has not heretofore been in favor of the indeterminate sentence, but I have been advocating it for many years", he said. His address, therefore, was looked forward to with great pleasure. Lord Cave called attention to his reason for dealing with this subject, first that it was very important, and second that there were so many different opinions regarding it. He considered the real use of the indeterminate sentence as most important, because it had the advantage of bringing out the best in the delinquent.

HOTEL CECIL DINNER:

A dinner was given in honor of the Delegates and

members of the Congress from Foreign States, by the British Reception Committee, on Friday evening, August 7th, presided over by Sir Evelyn Ruggles Brise K.C.B., President of the Congress. It was a large and important affair, and was held at the Hotel Cecil on the Strand. Addresses were made by the Right Hon. Edward Shortt, K.C., Dr. Hastings H. Hart, Vice President of the Congress, Mons. Andre Danjoy, French Commissioner, Herr Bumke, the new German Commissioner, Professor Enrico Ferri of Rome, and the Viscountess Astor M.P. Lady Astor is widely known. She confined her remarks to a lighter vein, and kept the guests in a continual state of merriment.

FIFTH DAY:

On Saturday morning, August 8th, an address, entitled "The Meaning of Punishment" was delivered in the General Assembly by the Right Honorable Viscount Haldane of Cloan K.T., O.M., Ex-Chancellor of England. Lord Haldane is unfortunately a victim of neuritis, and is sadly crippled by it. He was assisted to his chair on the platform, and read his address while seated. It met with generous response.

SIXTH DAY:

On Monday, August 10th, the Congress met in the General Assembly Room, and received the report of the Committee who recommended that the next Congress should be held in 1930 at Prague. The report was adopted. Many matters came up for discussion, and exactly as the noon bells were ringing, the Ninth International Prison Congress closed its sessions.

TOURS FOR DELEGATES:

A most comprehensive plan of visits was organized in advance for the benefit of the Delegates so that they could see leisurely the different institutions of England and Scotland, and many of the Delegates availed themselves of the privilege. It was all carried out in the most systematic manner, with tickets, hotel accommodations, and every possible facility. The Southern Portion was arranged for August 10th, 11th and 12th, and took in Bournemouth, and a visit to Dorchester Prison, a drive to Portland, and the afternoon at the Institution, and an evening Reception given by the Civic Authorities in Bournemouth. There was a boat trip to the Isle of Wight, and a visit to the Parkhurst and Camp Hill Prisons, lunching there, on to Cowes boat to Southampton and back to London.

The Northern Portion covered the days August 13th-18th and provided for a trip to Wakefield to visit the prison there, or to see the State Institution for Mental Defectives at Rampton, then on to Edinburgh, visiting Polmont and to see the Borstal Institution. A dinner was given by the Town Council of Edinburgh. On the 15th, a trip was made to the old and the new prisons, visiting the Industrial School and the Children's County Holiday Home, and entertained by Lord and Lady Polwarth. To Aberdeen, and to Balmoral by invitation of His Majesty King George. A visit was made to Aberdeen Prison, the Boys' Industrial School and Peterhead Prison, and the next day to Inverness, and the West Highlands and back to London.

FINAL ANALYSIS:

In summing up the results of the Congress, as I look back over the week spent in London, observing hour by hour, and day by day, the keen interest, displayed by hundreds of intelligent persons in the great subject of crime, I could not help but realize that we, as a people, were gradually coming, year by year, to feel that the whole subject was not something to be treated in a haphazard way, and settled simply by locking the door on the prisoner. I am convinced that the treatment of the offender is getting to be a study, and that it is still to be classed among the questions as yet unsolved. Here was a group of persons representing over half a hundred nations, trying to find the answer!

I am convinced, beyond the shadow of doubt, that these Congresses are helpful, and although some may say that the many questions involved and raised bring about fresh problems, yet that is really what we meet for, to ask questions, and to find out what the other fellow is doing. It is to be hoped that the work of the International Prison Commission will have a wider and more useful scope as time goes on.

B. Ogden Chisolm,
International Prison Commission.

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